Diversity at NASA-Ames Research Center

The NASA and Ames Research Center (ARC) policy statements on diversity reflect how integral diversity is to our mission success. NASA leadership is committed to creating a working environment that value and utilizes employee contributions at all levels. It is recognized that diversity will maximize the inclusion of everyone at Ames and across NASA.

Ames Research Center is championing diversity by infusing it into all of the Center's processes to ensure that diversity is integrated into the core values of the Center at all levels. Diversity is an important goal and employees will play an active and visible role in enforcing diversity throughout the Center. We believe that a thorough understanding of the commonalities and differences between diversity and EO is essential as we move forward to acknowledge the practical and problem-solving aspects of diversity.

<u>Ames Diversity Philosophy:</u>

1. Ames Definition of Diversity

"Diversity" is capturing each individual's uniqueness, developing them to their full potential by maximizing their talents, capabilities, and valuing their experiences.

2. Ames Diversity Principles

    – Diversity is NOT EEO, it is a leadership philosophy and management practice
    – Philosophy that our workforce is essential to the success of NASA/Ames
    – Maximizing the contribution of all individuals is the catalyst for innovation, creativity, and technological advancement

3. Ames Diversity Mission Statement

    • Create an **inclusive** work environment that recognizes and appreciates all employees' perspective
    • Provide each employee with **opportunities** to reach their highest career potential
      Embed diversity principles in decision-making processes to reinforce a high-performance **culture**

2. The Business Case

Diversity is the variety of people, culture and ideas that contribute to optimizing the Ames contribution to meet the NASA mission. **Diversity fosters inclusion, encourages the exchange of new ideas, supports decision-making processes, broadens the scope of problem solving, and engages the work force at every level.**

In a preliminary discussion regarding the Center's diversity management program the Diversity Leadership Course alumni developed the following questions based on their impressions regarding why ARC should address diversity given the current environment and the direction needed to meet future challenges.

- Does the current culture's decision-making process encourage alternate views and ideas at all levels of the workforce?
- Does the current Ames culture need to change in order to prevent lose of critical knowledge and skills, which could impact the Center's ability to meet its mission?
- Does Ames have the resources to be a global leader and set the standard for visionary program management?
- Will the Ames diversity objective ensure that ARC and its employees achieve the highest standards of performance, potential, and mission success?

Ames management recognizes that valuing diversity optimizes the Center's ability to extract contributions for work processes, work products, and decision-making strategies from across the workforce.

3. Importance of Diversity

- Diversity is a catalyst for stimulating innovation, creativity, and technological advancement from our workforce
- At a time when morale is being adversely impacted by changes in the Agency, it is imperative for Ames to create an environment of inclusion for all, in order to develop and retain the best and brightest
- In the current competitive environment, we believe diversity will help produce higher quality products
- Promote a productive work culture that recognizes and emphasizes valuing the employee

4. Benefits Realization

Ames Diversity activities, education and training will achieve the following benefits:

- Creation of an environment that encourages open dialogue and values individual ideas
- Promote developing, retaining, and attracting highly qualified individuals who can effectively contribute to mission success
- Increase innovation and problem solving capabilities by drawing from a wider knowledge base and variety of perspectives
- Encourage valuing all employees, promoting respect in the workplace, thus improving employee morale

Past & Current Ames Diversity Activities:

1. Development of the Ames Diversity Plan

A Diversity Sub-Committee was established to develop an ARC Diversity Plan. This plan would be based on the following groundwork developed by Diversity Leadership Alumni and presented to, and approved by the Diversity & Equal Opportunity Board (DEOB).

5. Diversity Education and Awareness

An awareness work team was created to increase the knowledge level and depth of understanding among employees and organizations through the use of leadership, communication, activities, training, and other organizational and management tools.

6. Diversity Assessment Survey

A committee of volunteers was organized to establish a process to provide periodic assessments of how the workforce defines, exhibits awareness of, and supports Center diversity. The results of the Ames Diversity Assessment Survey can be found on the Center's InsideAmes intranet and the ODEO website.

7. Diversity Plan Action Coordination

A team of employees developed and implemented a process to monitor diversity tasks performed by the diversity plan accountability, awareness and assessment work groups and monitor and report the status of the plan. The team shall determine future actions from the results of the Ames Diversity Assessment Survey.

8. Diversity Training

Over the past several years, three diversity training sessions have occurred around the Center to educate employees and enhance diversity awareness. The Diversity Leadership Course is an annual effort at Ames.

What is driving the push for Diversity at Ames?

NASA Ames Research Center, similar to other highly technical and successful institutions, finds itself with the dilemma of fighting to maintain successful models from the past, while embracing the changing workforce for the future and ensure its continued success. The most important factor to consider**: people** are essential to the success of NASA/Ames. In other words, the concept of Diversity, which is a synonym for the changing workforce, must be addressed with the same reverence as technology, both are critical to the success of NASA's Mission. Diversity programs in the past provided information regarding the cultural/social differences amongst groups, while the

information was important, it failed to connect the concept of diversity to the actual success of the organization.

Diversity must be an organizational philosophy requiring a fair, culturally rich, and productive work environment that fully utilizes the interest, talents, traditions, and skills of all employees. Diversity is the catalyst for innovation, creativity, and technological advancement. Philosophies for the 21st Century must connect to the success of the organization, not the moral center of its leadership. Ames realizes that we must give attention to recruiting, managing, and retaining a diverse, high-quality workforce by reviewing and assessing Ames policies, procedures, and practices that may impede development and implementation of processes in diversity.

Ames Diversity initiatives will promote diversity education, and awareness. Diversity activities were created and designed around a multi-year plan to provide a basic, practical understanding of the NASA business case for diversity. When you have employees who understand, recognize, and appreciate divergent ideas, perspectives, and culture increased morale and productivity exists. It is imperative that we embrace these values now because as NASA moves toward the implementation of President Bush's new vision for space exploration, a highly diverse and competent workforce will be vital to the success of the Agency's historic mission. With the President's Message of his new vision for NASA and the U.S. Space Program, the challenges and opportunities will be great for us. We need to be prepared to effectively and appropriately address the challenges and aggressively grab the opportunity to expand diversity at NASA and advance inclusion at every level and facet of the organization.

It is NASA policy to fully integrate diversity as a core value in all aspects of Agency operations. Consistent with the President's Management Agenda (NASA Human Capital Goals), the NASA Strategic Plan, and the One NASA vision, the drivers for NASA diversity policy are the Agency's commitment to a workforce that is representative of the nation's diversity, and a priority focus on ensuring inclusiveness at all levels and in all aspects of the Agency's work culture. Education, awareness, and technical assistance on diversity, and diversity activities are means to help achieve these goals.

Differences in EEO and Diversity

Equal Employment Opportunity	Diversity
– Hiring practices	– Developing Individuals/Teams
– Legal/Regulatory compliance	– Fostering and mentoring
– Outcome-oriented	– Process-oriented
– Quantitative measurements	– Qualitative measurements
– Identifying cultural differences	– Identifying professional inclusion
– Reactive	– Proactive
– Utilizes representation to prevent exclusion	– Utilizes culture change to achieve inclusion

EEO Compliance and Diversity: Making Sense of the Difference
The difference between Compliance Programs and Diversity Initiatives

EO Compliance Programs	Diversity Initiatives
Are enforced by Laws	Are implemented by Policy
Respond to the challenge of ending discrimination	Respond to the challenge of demographic changes
Seek individual conformity	Seek team collaboration
Equitable treatment is ensured for protected classes in the organization	Diversity of thought is ensured at every level of the organization
Study the culture of protected/ underrepresented interest groups in the organization	Study the culture of the organization which keeps interest groups underrepresented
Function of management with support from leadership – Belongs somewhere within the organization	Function of leadership with accountability from management - Belongs everywhere in the organization
"How to's" can be learned from experts teaching compliance requirements to members of the organization	"How to's" must be learned from members of the organization who engage in identifying and targeting barriers
Can be measured through statistical profiles indicating status of protected classes and the number of complaints and settlements	Can be measured through metrics and structural reforms which work to reduce the number of complaints and settlements
Can be manipulated by parachuting qualified/unqualified "Tokens" and through a process which engages in Counting Heads instead of making Heads Count	Can be manipulated by "Flavor of the Month" efforts which become Floppy Disk in their impact on the organization, rather than part of the Hard Drive
At the heart of the Pledge not to Discriminate is the commitment Of Valuing Diversity	At the Heart of Valuing Diversity Diversity is the Commitment not to Discriminate
Is the Right and Smart Thing To Do	Is the Smart and Right Thing To Do

Diversity Definition

Diversity is an *inclusive environment* wherein differences are valued and integrated into every part of an organization's operation in order to

- *ensure exceptional customer service*
- *ensure the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of employees*
- *achieve exceptional workplace and business performance*
- *deliver the highest quality products and services*

"If we are to survive, we will have learned to take a delight in the essential differences between people and between cultures. We will have learned that differences in ideas and attitudes are a delight, part of life's exciting variety, not something to fear."

Susan Sackett
Inside Trek: A Star Trek Memoir

The Dimensions of Diversity

The dimensions of diversity are classified according to the following categories:

Human Diversity*	Cultural Diversity	Systems Diversity
Characterized by physical differences, personal preferences, or life experiences	Characterized by beliefs, values, ethics, personal characteristics, and worldviews	Characterized by the organizational structure, performance initiatives, and management systems
• Race • Sex • Differently-Abled • Marital/Family Status • Sexual Orientation • Ethnicity • Age • Military Experience	• Language • Learning Style • Gender • Historical Differences • Cross-Cultural Relationship/ Communication • Religion • Workstyle • Classism/Elitism • Ethics/Values • Work-Life • Power • Group/Individual Orientation • Relationship/ Task Orientation	• Teamwork • Innovation • Reengineering • Strategic Alliances • Empowerment • Quality • Education • Corporate Acquisitions • Work Process Redesign • Customer Focus • Environmental, Safety, and Health • Family-Friendly Practices

* Human Diversity refers to the diverse representation of employees who will be essential to our continuing success both locally and globally.

EEO & Diversity Desired Result:
Level Playing Field

- Diverse productive workforce
- Equitable and accessible work environment
- Inclusive environment where all employees are valued
- Work environment free from discrimination & harassment

Diversity

Focuses on developing an environment that maximizes the potential of all employees by valuing diversity interpersonally and institutionally

Business necessity given work force trends

Broader than ethnicity, race, and gender

Inclusive of all groups and individuals

Not legally mandated

Affirmative Employment:

Identifies and eliminates employment barriers for under represented groups

Helps prevent discrimination

Focuses on women, minorities and people with disabilities

Legally mandated

EEO:

Serves to eliminate discrimination in the implementation of employment practices

Provides equal access and opportunity – no one excluded from participation

All belong to one or more legally protected groups

Legally mandated